

Prof. E. Ray Lankester, F.R.S., exhibited and made remarks on a living example of a Scorpion from Ceylon (*Buthus caruleus*).

A communication was read from Prof. T. Jeffrey Parker, being the first of a series of studies in New-Zealand Ichthyology. The present paper gave a description of the skeleton of *Regalecus argenteus*. The species was founded on a specimen cast ashore at Moeraki, Otago, in June 1883.

This paper will be printed entire in the Society's 'Transactions.'

The following papers were read :—

1. On the Acclimatization of the Japanese Deer at Powerscourt. By Viscount POWERSCOURT, F.Z.S.¹

[Received February 23, 1884.]

In the years 1858 and 1859 I took up the idea of experimenting upon the acclimatization of various animals which I thought might be ornamental as well as useful in Deer-parks in the United Kingdom, as suggested by the collection formed at Knowsley by Lord Derby.

I purchased, mostly from Jamrach, the well-known animal-dealer, various kinds of Deer and Antelopes.

I had at one time alive together in a park formed for the purpose at Powerscourt, in a part of the place called the Racecourse, containing about 100 acres, of which about two thirds was open pasture and one third wood, Red Deer, white as well as common, Sambur Deer, Nylghaies, Axis Deer, Llamas, Elands, Wapiti Deer, and Moufflons or Wild Sheep.

The Red Deer of course increased, and the Wapiti Deer also bred ; but the Nylghaies, which were running about quite healthy one evening, were both found dead the next day.

The Sambur Deer lived for two or three years, but never throve well, neither did the Axis Deer. The Elands were also too delicate for the climate of Ireland, and I very soon found it necessary to dispose of them, as they would not have lived. I had only a pair of them, and they were sold to the Antwerp Zoological Gardens.

There were originally three Wapiti Deer, unfortunately only one of them a female, and they were of the same breed which Lord Derby had had at Knowsley. I tried to get another female, but at that time it seemed to be almost impossible ; the female which I had, met with an accident and broke her leg, but nevertheless she produced a stag calf a few months afterwards. She had had a female calf the year before, so that my herd was increased to five animals. But the only males were the sire of the female calf and another young male, which died. I then, finding the small park where they were too confined in space, had all the Deer caught and removed to the large Deer-park, containing about 1000 acres.

¹ See, for previous notes on this subject, P. Z. S. 1879, p. 294.

After all the Deer had been there for a year there was a remarkable improvement in their health, from the extent and variety of pasture which they had there, and the Wapiti as well as the Sambur and Red Deer improved very much. But unfortunately one of the Red Stags had a fight one day with the Wapiti, and, being more active, gave him a thrust and broke his hind leg, just below the hock. We managed to secure the wounded Wapiti and to set the leg; but although the bone knit, and he could put his foot to the ground, he never recovered, but dwindled away and died. I then sold the remainder of the Wapiti to an agent of King Victor Emmanuel of Italy.

The Sambur Deer lived for three or four years, and as there was no male (one which I had got from the Royal Collection at Windsor having died), there were several hybrids born, no doubt between a Red Stag and the Sambur hinds, but one by one, both the pure Sambur and the hybrids died off, until there were none left. The climate was evidently too damp for them.

It was a curious thing with the Sambur Deer, and it was no doubt the cause of their death, that they never would come out of the thickets in the daytime. They unfortunately could not be taught that Ireland has not a tropical climate, and they used to skulk in the thickest cover they could find, *out of the sun*, all day, and only came out to feed at night, as they would in the jungles of Mysore, where I have seen them pursuing the same tactics. Of course by this unnecessary precaution on their part against the meridian rays, of which we should like to see a little more in this country than we do, they got chilled through, and eventually died.

In the meantime, on a visit to Jamrach I had seen some Japanese Deer (*Cervus sika*); and I thought that as the climate of Japan is a pretty severe one in winter, I would try if they would succeed any better than the other species. I bought therefore one male and three females; and these have been the only Deer of any newly introduced kind which have been a real success.

The Llamas and other animals all died off; and these pretty little Deer are the only ones which have multiplied, and have also never required any shelter of any kind nor any winter-feeding except what the ordinary Red Deer and Fallow Deer get, such as hay &c. I find that Indian corn is the best food for all Deer after hay. It is easily given, and there is no waste, as they pick up every grain as soon as thrown out to them. I tried locust beans, which are good but expensive, and also oil-cake, but they do not eat that up so clean as the Indian corn, and if the weather is wet it melts away.

There should be rock-salt always given to Deer, in places where it can be put, in a shed of some kind, so as not to be exposed to wet.

These Japanese Deer were put into the park at Powerscourt about the year 1860, and at present (1884) I have upwards of 100 of them, besides having shot two or three yearly, and also having given away a great many and sold others.



The Japanese Deer (*Cervus sika*).

I have distributed Japanese Deer from my herd to the following places up to this time, and I believe they are thriving in every locality where they have been introduced; so that they may be looked upon quite as a British Park-Deer:—at Killarney, in the woods of Muckross; at Glenstal (Sir Croker Barrington's), near Limerick; at Castlewellan (Lord Annesley's) in county Down; at Colebrooke (Sir Victor Brooke's), county Fermanagh; at Lord Ilchester's, Melbury, Dorsetshire; and at Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild's, Waddesdon Manor, Aylesbury.

The Japanese Deer here have undoubtedly interbred with the Red Deer; there are three or four Deer in the Park here which are certainly hybrids, the Red hind in each case being the dam.

The Japanese are a most satisfactory little Deer; the venison when dressed is about the size of Welsh mutton and very well flavoured. The little Stags, with their black coats and thick necks like miniature Sambar, are very picturesque and ornamental, and I think they are a decided addition to our varieties of hardy Park Deer. Some of them are always to be seen in the Society's Gardens; but these give no idea of the beauty of the animals when in a wild state in a park.

They also have a most peculiar cry in the rutting-season, a sort of whistle, varying sometimes into a scream.

Any body wishing for venison of a small size and good quality will, I think, find these Deer very desirable for that purpose.